

January 30, 2026

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Distinguished Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 288 - Highway User Revenues Capital Grants - Calculation, and urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

Data available from 2020 to 2025 shows that St. Mary's County's population has steadily grown by 1–3 percent, even as population declines in other Maryland jurisdictions. In fact, the tri-county area of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's is now the fastest-growing region in the state. Residents can see the effects of this growth firsthand, with new residential and commercial development rapidly coming online. However, transportation infrastructure has not kept pace.

For a rural county like St. Mary's, financing major infrastructure improvements is often cost-prohibitive. As a result, the county relies heavily on developers to help fund transportation upgrades. While developer contributions are important—and necessary—relying on them as a primary funding mechanism is not sound long-term policy. This approach makes residents dependent on additional development, and the traffic it brings, before improvements can occur.

Historically, counties received a higher share of highway user revenues until that policy was changed more than a decade ago under then-Governor Martin O'Malley. Although the State has since indicated those revenue rates would be restored, no action has been taken. The consequences are clear in St. Mary's County, where aging roads and intersections are being forced to accommodate traffic volumes they were never designed to handle. Because many of our major roads are state-maintained, the county has limited ability to improve traffic flow on its own. Expanding the county road network is one option, but once again, the cost is prohibitive.

At the same time, additional expenses—such as teacher pensions and SDAT operational costs—continue to be shifted onto counties, leaving even fewer local dollars available for essential, quality-of-life infrastructure projects. This bill helps counter that trend.

I support Senate Bill 288 because it will help St. Mary's County invest in the future of its transportation network while reducing reliance on developer-funded solutions. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

Thank you,

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